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NEW SOVIET BOMBER OBSERVED AT AIRCRAFT PLANT AT MOSCOW/FILI

A large, new Soviet jet bomber was sighted on the factory airfield at Moscow/Fili on 27 August. The new aircraft was observed outside the plant which has been producing the BISON ~~DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS~~ heavy jet bombers. There have been indications that a new aircraft might be under development at this plant; BISON production has been erratic and dwindling, and increased activity--including night work--was noted in the portion of the plant which is believed to be the design bureau.

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The aircraft appears to be

a modified delta-wing, four-jet bomber with dual tandem landing gear and outriggers at the wing tips. Similar type landing gear is employed on the BISON, BLOWLAMP and FLASHLIGHT.

You will notice two very large jet engines at the wing tips and two more underslung on pylon. The wing span is variously estimated at from "eighty plus" to "96 feet," while the fuselage length has been estimated

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to be at least 170 feet. The length is

difficult if not impossible to confirm at the moment

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The engines are probably larger than those of the BADGER and the BISON and when heard and observed in operation gave the impression of large mass air flow.

The general configuration of this aircraft appears to

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indicate that it was designed for high performance; the wings are pronouncedly swept back and thin, the fuselage is apparently long and thin, and the engines appear to be powerful and mounted at points advantageous to high speed flight.

Although the performance data of this prototype is presently unknown, the most probe which is reported together with other design evidence, indicates that the aircraft probably is not capable of reaching the North American continent on unrefuelled flight, and it will probably not appear in operational units for about another year.

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